



# RBGE Diploma in Herbology

Applicants' Handbook  
Online Course 2025

ROYAL  
BOTANIC  
GARDEN  
EDINBURGH



# A Note from your Tutor

*'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin' (Shakespeare)*

Welcome to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's Diploma in Herbology. I am delighted to forward this copy of our handbook to provide you with more details about this innovative and exciting course.

There has never been a more auspicious time to study all things 'green', to learn how to work as one with nature, understand the precious therapeutic potentials of medicinal plants and how to nurture the earth that sustains them. Herbology (quite literally the study of herbs) draws together several connected branches of botanical study into one holistic discipline.

It is unique to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and is imbued with that special spirit that comes from over three hundred years of devoted horticultural tradition, dedicated resources, and the world-renowned endeavours of a remarkable people and place.

As a Herbology student you will be actively involved with, and become part of, this extraordinary botanical legacy and as such, you will be a most eagerly awaited participant in the future of our much-loved programme of study here at the Botanic, as it perpetually unfolds and develops.

This really is a wonderful opportunity to share in something very special. All of our knowledge and expertise is at your fingertips.

We look forward to receiving your application soon!



Catherine Conway-Payne  
BA (Hons) M.DES. MNIMH  
Learning Department  
0131 248 2937  
[rbge.org.uk/dipherb](http://rbge.org.uk/dipherb)

## Table of Contents

A Note from your Tutor.....	2
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Course Leader and Lecturers.....	5
3. Course Structure.....	6
4. The Course Aims.....	7
5. Course Contents.....	7
6. Assessments.....	17
7. Course Dates and Times.....	18
8. Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Study Weekends.....	20
9. Online Learning: How does it work?.....	24
10. Course Fees.....	26
11. Entry Requirements.....	27
12. Application Procedure.....	27
12. The Next Step.....	28
13. Terms & Conditions.....	29
14. Privacy Notice.....	30

# 1. Introduction

The roots of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh were well and truly embedded in the ancient practices of herbal medicine when it was founded as a Physic Garden in the late 17th Century. Now, over three hundred years later, our unique Diploma in Herbology rekindles that healing tradition. Herbology, quite literally the 'study of herbs', is an innovative programme of study that draws together several connected branches of botanical science to clearly demonstrate the remarkable remedial properties of plants, and the many practical applications that this knowledge can afford. As a student of Herbology you will be directly involved in our ever-evolving organic Physic Garden, and the preparation of some quite remarkable home herbal remedies, while at the same time being immersed in the Garden's own uniquely magical and curative spirit.

The subject of Herbology is by its very nature an expansive one, and our programme aims to encompass many of the most fascinating elements, carefully distilled from key topics considered fundamental for the enjoyment and rewarding nature of its study. Given the garden's medicinal provenance, much may be made of both the traditional and contemporary 'Hortus Medicus Edinburgensis', and the accompanying Materia medica, which still very much exists (as something of a herbal remedy-maker's gold mine!) amongst the Garden's botanical collections. This alone will invariably impart its own particular character (and lend weight) to our studies, most notably within the fields of Green Pharmacy, Physic Garden Design and Horticulture.

The main aim of our Diploma in Herbology is to share, enjoy and disseminate knowledge within this subject. We hope to provide a solid foundation from which you will be able to progress along your own particular path of learning and to stimulate, encourage and enthuse you, imparting the confidence required to enable you to explore this most compelling of disciplines further, and to present a context in which you may link related holistic experiences independently. All of which may be continued far beyond your studies with us.

## 2. Course Leader and Lecturers

### RBGE Herbology Director - Catherine Conway-Payne

Born in rural Cumbria, Catherine's very deep love of the natural world greatly inspired her early development as an artist, and indeed herbalist. Catherine came to Edinburgh to study within the School of Design at Edinburgh College of Art, and following completion of her studies there, and a postgraduate lectureship, she went on to study herbal medicine under the auspices of the renown herbalist Hein Zeylstra, founder and former principal of the highly acclaimed College of Phytotherapy. Upon graduation, Catherine joined the National Institute of Medical Herbalists, the world's oldest herbal organisation, and subsequently went on to co-ordinate one of the first accredited postgraduate courses in Complementary Alternative Medicine. Catherine joined the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in the autumn of 2005, where she established a bespoke selection of introductory short courses in Herbal Medicine, the success of these ensured the future of our present Herbology programme. Catherine now delivers an expansive range of holistic botanical studies in her role as the garden's resident, (or near resident!), Herbologist.

### Our Guest Lecturers

Many dedicated lecturers from diversely creative backgrounds of botanical expertise, are invited to join the RBGE Diploma in Herbology to deliver their own highly individual classes as part of the programme's unique content of study.

So, as a Diploma in Herbology student you will be able to engage with not only several practicing herbalists, but also our very own botanist, organic and biodynamic horticulturists and wildlife gardeners, wild forager (extraordinaire!), distiller, botanical percolation expert, a local soap maker, herbal astrologist, physic garden historians and physic garden designer, and our post graduate SSSI conservationist, seaweed-pressing herbarium artist, Goethean science and anthroposophical practitioners, alchemist, nutritionist, herbal confectioner and chocolate maker, amongst others!

### 3. Course Structure

The RBGE Diploma in Herbology Course (Blended Learning, meaning online with study days) uses PropaGate Learning which is RBGE's virtual learning environment.

The duration of the course is two years, a year longer than the taught version of the herbology diploma delivered at RBGE.

Each year of study runs from late October through to early May and is divided into 3 terms. As study for this programme is mostly independent, a timetable is supplied to enable the student to progress through their studies at an optimal pace for completion within the designated timeframe.

Over the two years there will be 4 study Weekends at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. The study weekends are a hugely enjoyable component of the blended diploma and take the form of structured classroom sessions to compliment the topics of study that students will be working on. We will take time during the study weekends to practise or demonstrate some of the practical elements of the course. The study weekends will also afford engaging moments out in the garden alongside fieldtrips and visits to help inspire your studies.

Study time per week will vary but will most likely be in the region of 5-7 hours – which should be adequate for assignments and revisionary work to be completed.

Assignments (for all assessed work) and online activities will be set in accordance with the suggested rate of the programme's progression.

Individual tutorial guidance is available throughout the academic year.

## 4. The Course Aims

- To explore and explain the world of herbs
- Encourage the study, custodianship and sustainable use of medicinal plants.
- Share understanding of the earth's herbal lore
- Enrich awareness of and involvement with the natural world
- Nurture the creative use of healing botanicals.

## 5. Course Contents

The course is divided into the following 5 modules. Each includes both practical and theoretical elements.

- Phytology
- Green Pharmacy & Pharmacology
- Physic Garden Horticulture
- Ethnomedica
- Medicinal Herb Ecology
- Dissertation

## 5.1 Phytology

Phytology (the study of plants) is presented here as a unique combination of 3 fundamental components of our Herbology studies. These are:

### Part I - Botany

Botany for Beginners – a carefully adapted study topic) that has been especially tailored to meet the particular requirements of our Herbology programme. Emphasis has been placed on the forms and functions of plants, their external structural morphology, inner tissue histology, metabolism and nutrition. (Fungi, Bryophytes (mosses, liverworts and hornworts), Arboreals, Lichens, and sea Algae are all included as part of this study).

Folk and Linnaean nomenclature, together with useful techniques to facilitate correct identification of indigenous and non-native herbs whilst out in the field, will also be covered.

### Part II - Materia Medica

Materia medica (the medicinal ingredients or materials used in our herbal remedy-making) embraces an extensive range of healing botanicals and the various therapeutic compounds that might be derived from them. Many medicinal treasures are to be found amongst the Garden's own remarkable collections of both native and non-native plants and many of these may be thoroughly explored within their seasonal time frames.

The basic techniques of elementary Botanical Illustration are taught as complementary to this (and indeed other) subject/s of study – enabling students to capture a herbs intrinsic characteristic quickly and subjectively whilst 'out in the field.

## Part III - Herbaria

A herbarium is essentially a dried garden, a repository or reference library of botanical forms. A collection of herbaria captures a floristic moment in time and may be utilized by many diverse people for the purposes of documentation, learning and enjoyment.

Knowing how to correctly gather, prepare and present a herbaria collection (whether pressed and dried or in Spirit or Carpological form) not only enriches the Herbologist's creative repertoire, it also provides a valuable point of reference to facilitate herbal identification, and perfectly complements our exploratory studies in elementary Botany.

### Required for Assessment:

- A Herbal Journal - (Reflections on Learning – not graded, but completion required)
- 9 Complementary Study Assignments
- A Herbarium Collection (12 dried, pressed and mounted medicinal herb specimens)

## 5.2 Green Pharmacy & Pharmacology

### Green Pharmacy - (Herbal Remedy-Making)

Some of the most exciting moments of the RBGE Herbology programme are undoubtedly when you come to make your first herbal remedies – your very own Green Pharmacy preparations.

These remedies may be made using herbs that you have grown yourself from seed, sourced from your local herbal dispensary or gathered in the wild. You will be provided with all the instructions you need to successfully make your own herbal ‘medicine chest’ and an abundance of delicious recipes to choose from.

Pharmacology concurrently explores that most magical and holistic of synergies - the precious medicinal constituents (or healing compounds) that are nurtured within the herbs themselves. We will study associated herbal recipe formulations, compile some of our own bespoke adaptations and ponder their potential for eliciting a desired therapeutic effect within or without the various bodily systems.

### Pharmacology

We have structured your Pharmacological studies into 3 easy to digest aperitifs as follows:

(Please note that the topic of Pharmacology is not assessed directly – but knowledge in the subject will be required for completion of your Pharmacopoeia and Complementary Study Assignments.)

### Part I - How Herbs Work

Here we establish herb/body connections, and experience firsthand many of the remarkable healing compounds that might be sourced from an exemplary range of medicinal botanicals - collectively referred to as our herbal *Materia medica*. Learn about how the herbs are absorbed, their transport mechanisms, and the therapeutic influences they affect – all the Pharmacokinetic and Pharmacodynamic effects of your favourite herbal medicines will be revealed.

## Part II – Phyto-Pharmaceuticals

A self-directed study of herbal recipes and formulations, will enable you to discover an extensive range of phyto-pharmaceuticals and provide the means by which you are able to compile your own working Pharmacopoeia or 'Dispensatory' (that is a book of directions or recipes), that will describe the properties of profiled herbs, and how they may be prepared safely into home herbal remedies for everyday use. As a Diploma in Herbology student you will be able to engage directly with some of nature's most wonderful wild harvested ingredients and learn about the often ecologically fragile phenomena that link everything together (e.g. the honey, herb. bee connections).

## Part III - Nutraceuticals

A mixed bag of herbal nutrition and pharmaceutical study, for our purposes this component of the Pharmacology explores a particular group of nutrient-rich edible botanicals, or phyto-nutrient derived compounds, (such as honey), and considers their therapeutic potential in our Green Pharmacy formulations.

A variety of indigenous herbs from around the world, renowned for their particular antioxidant, recuperative or energizing effects will be held to account - not least our very own and delightful Sea Buckthorn Berry.

## Required for Assessment:

- Herbal Remedy Preparations (10)
- A Working Pharmacopoeia

## 5.3 Physic Garden Horticulture

The very heart of Herbology at RBGE!

Physic Garden Horticulture enables students to design and create their own physic garden herb bed, learn how to tend and nurture herbs for practical, nutritional and pharmaceutical applications and effectively implement organic/biodynamic propagation techniques.

(Phytology - which affords the compilation of a Herbarium, together with the completion of a Herbal Journal and Complementary Study Assignments, is intended to augment this part of your programme of study which includes the following:)

### Part I – Physic Garden Origins & History

Traces the development of physic gardens from ancient concepts of the ‘garden of paradise’ to the innovative interpretations of contemporary design, and of course that magical 1670 moment in between when our own story really begins.

Visits to local physic gardens will feature throughout.

### Part II – Physic Garden Design & Development

This takes the form of a theoretical design project, towards the creation of possible ‘medicinal’ garden beds, wildlife havens and healing herbal spaces - either here at the Botanic, or other alternative venues. Template designs are taken out into the field to explore the possibilities of selected settings, habitats and landscapes. Herbologists embark on an initially collaborative (group) endeavour to rethink and rework the existing potential of these designated locations, before learning how to draw up their own individual designs, interpretation and working proposals, for a functional and contemporary ‘physic’ garden area.

## Part III - Holistic Herbal Husbandry and Practical Physic Gardening

Here you will learn how to sow, nurture and harvest your own herbs. Holistic Herbal Husbandry focuses on the principles and practice of organic and biodynamic methodologies and adopts a 'from seed to syrup' approach towards practical physic gardening and the creation of a medicinal herb bed. All the fundamental components required of rewarding physic gardening will be covered (arboriculture, pomology and olericulture may also be included here).

### Required for Assessment:

- Herb Bed Project Plan & Physic Gardener's Journal
- Practical Horticultural Work
- Physic Garden Design (Theory)

## 5.4 Ethnomedica

The study of Ethnomedica affords an opportunity to research the indigenous herbal folk traditions of the world. From the Himalayas to our own native Highlands and Islands.

This is a precious knowledge, and arguably the most valuable part of our botanical heritage. The need for organizations such as botanic gardens to collect, collate and research the remaining herbal traditions before they are lost to us forever, has never been more pressing.

The following subtopics are included:

### Part I - People Place Plants

The Ethnobotanical side of Indigenous Herbal Lore will be introduced by our own well-travelled experts in the field, and where possible visiting practitioners or doctors in traditional herbal medicine.

### Part II - The Oral Tradition

Remembered remedies are quite literally the unwritten fragments of knowledge passed down through the generations. With the passage of time more and more folk knowledge is lost to us, and therefore the more valuable it becomes and the more urgent our need to 'capture' it. RBGE students will learn how they can become involved in Ethnomedica projects to work with herbalists, ethnobotanists and oral historians to help preserve and develop this remarkable legacy.

### Part III - From Folk to Fact

Here we explore the latest evidence-based research that corroborates (or otherwise) the validity of so many of the old herbal remedies and practices.

### Required for Assessment:

- Remembered Remedies Assignment

## 5.5 Medicinal Herb Ecology

This expansive subject has been especially tailored to meet the requirements of the Herbology programme and the sub-topics covered include:

### Part I - Wild Harvest Habitats

This topic explores the diversity of medicinal flora within selected indigenous habitats, and the delicate ecological connections that exist within such realms and their myriad organic structures. These sessions will be conducted mostly out in the field, and will also demonstrate good practice wild forage/harvest techniques, showing how to gather remedy ingredients sustainably, and work as one in the natural world.

Our local arboreal, oceanic and moorland habitats will be studied and analysed within this context.

### Part II - Conservation

As one of the worlds most renown Botanic gardens, RBGE is strategically placed to lead global efforts to reverse the impending extinction crisis now faced by so many of the earth's medicinal and nutritional plants.

Our aim for the Diploma in Herbology is to actively involve students with conservation projects (both here at RBGE, and through our partner organizations and field stations) that seek to reverse the loss of key botanicals and their habitats through targeted recovery and restoration programmes. Relevant medicinal herb conservation projects, and issues pertaining to the honour of intellectual property rights, title to traditional lands, and responsible prospecting for natural resources, will be highlighted.

## Part III - Phenology Field Study

In conjunction with RBGE's own phenology projects, herbologists are taught how to conduct simple phenological studies of their own, which will enable them to consider changes in the earth's/nature's seasonal time frames, and the significance of these observations for physic garden culture. Some of the holistic strategies and solutions that herbologists might adopt and implement to help sustain, nurture or restore, the most vulnerable inhabitants of a medicinal herb bed (flora and fauna), will be explored.

### Required for Assessment:

- Field Study Assignment

## 5.6 Dissertation

Each student is required to research and write a 5000-word dissertation to be submitted by the end of the final Summer semester (May Study Weekend). This should focus on one of the major branches of study that form the RBGE Diploma in Herbology programme. Individual proposals are discussed and agreed with your dedicated dissertation tutor.

## 6. Assessments

For the award of Diploma in Herbology, all 5 modules must be successfully completed. This requires written or practical pieces of work to be undertaken for each of the taught modules. Each student is also required to prepare and write a 5000 word dissertation to be submitted upon completion of the course.

Course Contents	Award	Location Submission
Phytology	27%	Online/RBGE
Physic Garden Horticulture	15%	Online/RBGE
Green Pharmacy & Pharmacology	20%	Online/RBGE
Ethnomedica	7.5%	Online
Ecology	7.5%	Online
Dissertation/Thesis	23%	Online

### Completion of Work

All project work (Theory & Practical) must be completed and submitted for assessment within the allocated period of study. Successful students will be awarded the RBGE Diploma of Herbology.

### Plagiarism Checking Software

RBGE currently has access to a tool called 'Turnitin'. Turnitin is an online service that promotes academic integrity helps you to submit your best original work. It also aids your tutor to give meaningful feedback. Some of your assessments will make use of this tool.

By submitting your work to PropaGate Learning, you agree that your work will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin for the detection of plagiarism. When you upload your first piece of work, you will have to agree to the [End User Licence Agreement](#). You will not have a separate username or password because it is integrated into our site. Personal data will only be shared with Turnitin if you have your name or other personal data on your paper or in the file name.

You will be able to view the similarity report before final submission and adjust submissions as appropriate.

See [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) for more info. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the [Usage Policy](#) posted on the Turnitin.com site. Papers can be removed from these databases by request to Turnitin. If any of this information changes, we will inform you during your course.

If any of this information changes, we will inform you during your course.

## 7. Course Dates and Times

This Blended Learning Programme comprises a blend of Online Study and Study Weekends held here at RBGE, full details of the study weekends can be found in section 8.

### Year I

Term/Semester	Subjects	Dates
Early Autumn Winter	Phytology (I. II. III) Physic Garden Hort. (Intro. & Theory I) Pharmacology (Intro. to Pharmacopoeia) Green Pharmacy (Intro. + I & II)	Oct-Dec 2025
Winter Early Spring	Phytology (III) Physic Garden Hort. (Theory II) Pharmacology (I) Green Pharmacy (III & IV)	Dec-Feb 2025-2026
Spring	Phytology (III) Physic Garden Hort. (Theory III) Pharmacology (II) Green Pharmacy (V & VI)	Feb-April 2026
Late Spring Early Summer	Phytology (III) Physic Garden Hort. (Theory IV) Pharmacology (III) Green Pharmacy (VII & VIII)	April-June 2026

## Year II

Term/Semester	Subjects	Dates
Summer	Physic Garden Hort. (Sustained -Self-Directed) Physic Garden History Physic Garden Design Green Pharmacy (Self-Directed) (Make 1 Remedy: Spring-Summer)	June-August 2026
Late Summer Early Autumn	Physic Garden Hort. (Sustained - Self-Directed) Ethnomedica (I. II. III) Medicinal Herb Ecology (I. II. III) Green Pharmacy (Self-Directed) (Make 1 Remedy: Summer-Autumn)	Aug-Oct 2026
Late Autumn Winter	Physic Garden Hort. (Sustained - Self-Directed) Dissertation Green Pharmacy (Self-Directed) (Make 1 Remedy: Autumn-Winter)	Oct-Dec 2026
Winter Early Summer	Physic Garden Hort. (Sustained - Self-Directed) Dissertation Green Pharmacy (Self-Directed) (Make 1 Remedy: Final Study Weekend in May)	Dec-May 2026-2027
RBGE Diploma Student Celebration of Success September 2027 (exact date TBC)		

# 8. Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

## Study Weekends

### Study Weekend I

#### Friday 24th October 2025 - A Warm Welcome

An introductory morning followed by an afternoon visit to the renown RBGE Herbarium, for practical instruction on how to handle a selection of the more unusual herbaria (such as sea algae) that provide us with some of the most beautiful, engaging and original 'art' forms of the 'pressed and dried' botanical collection.

#### Saturday 25th October 2025 - Green Pharmacy: Fruits & Roots

A study of the bountiful seasonal Materia medica leads us naturally into some of the most delicious and medicinal herbal remedies of the early autumn. Unguents and Balms, ruby red, amber and liquid gold Syrups, jewel-like Compots and irresistible spiced Robs will all feature here.

#### Sunday 26th October 2025 - Physic Garden Horticulture: Organic & Biodynamic Principles & Practice

On this, the first of our practical physic gardening classes, we explore the earthy (and often celestial!) realms of organic and biodynamic herb culture, and ponder some of the design considerations that may influence the creation of a simple rectilinear herb bed - of the kind popularized by the traditional physic gardens of old. Gardening by the phases of the moon, under the influence of the stars, and in harmony with the elemental forces of nature, you will learn how to prepare your own 'potentized' BD preparations, holistically nurture a collection of medicinal herbs and, most importantly of all, sustain the earth that supports them. This class will be led by one of the leading exponents of the Biodynamic movement (to be confirmed), and will take place within our dedicated herbology Globe Physic Garden and the surrounding herb beds of RBGE.

Selected seeds will be gathered and storage techniques demonstrated from within the RBGE Herbology Herb Beds and Globe Physic Garden.

## Study Week End II

### Friday 15th May 2026 - Seaweedopedia

A glorious exploration of sea algae from one of our best loved foragers, with some delicious recipes, and dedicated seaweed identification booklets to follow at home afterwards. (Seaweed pressings may also feature).

### Saturday 16th May 2026 - Visits: A Herbal Botanizing Expedition & Chainbridge Honey Farm

Here we journey out to explore one of the most fascinating of our local sea and shore habitats and discover (amongst old familiars), some of the more unusual (sometimes rare) botanicals that exist now only on the very fringes of herbal medicine, but once readily populated the pages of our pharmacopoeias.

Then we travel onwards to the renowned Chainbridge Honey Farm.

The honey bee provides us with some of the most precious ingredients needed for many of the traditional herbal remedies that we make, and during this 'behind the scenes' visit to a local family-run honey farm, you will be able to learn everything you need to know about beeswax, bee gum (propolis), pollen grains and royal jelly etc., together with how each may be carefully collected, prepared and utilized in a very holistic Green Pharmacy. Remarkable insights into the life of honeybees, the inner workings of the hive and the gentle husbandry required of the conscientious beekeeper, will be afforded throughout the afternoon.

### Sunday 17th May 2026 - Spring Green Herb Gathering & Pharmacy

A 'Wild Bear's Medicine' inspired day!

## Study Week End III

### Friday 30th October 2026 - Physic Garden Design & History

A delightful amble through the origins and design of the early physic garden is combined with easy-to-follow tutorial guidance on how to draw up a simple but compelling plan for the creation of a contemporary medicinal herb garden (holistic green environ), or wildlife haven of your own.

### Saturday 31st October 2024 - A Fungi Forage

Into the wild woods for an enchanting medicinal mushroom hunt under the expert guidance of our dedicated mycologist, we discover some of the 'friends and foes' of the fungi world, learn a little of their remarkable pharmacology, and most crucially, how to recognize their distinguishing features, habitats and defining characteristics to help ensure correct identification. Several carefully selected fungi, appropriate for our use in home herbal remedies, will be explored in some depth.

### Sunday 1st November 2026 - A Master Class in Alcoholic Extraction & Distillation of Spiritous Waters

Discover the particular extraction techniques required for compounding several darkly delicious alcoholic Extracts & Elixirs.

Followed by a very therapeutic exploration of the ancient art of alembic distillation and perfumery. During this practical class, you will be shown how to distil your own aromatic and spirituous waters, (for use either on their own, or as highly desirable adjuncts incorporated into other herbal preparations) and discover the unexpectedly medicinal properties of some of the world's most legendary and earliest of perfumes.

## Study Week End IV

Friday 7th May 2027 - A Farewell Green Pharmacy - Millefleure & Flower Water Essences

(Details to Follow)

Saturday 8th May 2027 - Green Pharmacy Assessment & Review

(Details to Follow)

Sunday 9th May 2027 - The Course Concludes Tabletop Display & Review

(Details to Follow)

*(Please note that the exact content of the study weekends is given here as a guide only and may be subject to change nearer the time)*

# 9. Online Learning: How does it work?

## Introduction

Your online learning environment is PropaGate Learning which uses the Moodle learning platform. It can be found at [propagatelearning.rbge.ac.uk](http://propagatelearning.rbge.ac.uk).

PropaGate Learning is a website you log in to access your course(s). It's a place for learning and for discussing topics and progress with your tutors and other students. PropaGate Learning allows you to study from home, whilst becoming part of a thriving and enthusiastic learning community.

Your course will consist of a number of elements which may include documents, presentations, videos, interactive lessons, quizzes, discussion forums and links to useful websites.

We continually review and update the course, and we are currently updating the course to ensure it is more accessible.

## How can I prepare for studying online?

We would expect you to be a competent computer user with a basic understanding of standard computer applications such as using an internet browser, email and word processing. Experience of participating in online forums would also be a benefit, but not essential as these skills can be learned while participating in an online course.

Our '[Digital Skills Check](#)' will help you to identify any areas of IT you may need to brush up on.

When you are first given access to PropaGate Learning, please take time to complete the Orientation Activity and complete some other initial activities including introducing yourself on the forum, updating your profile and familiarising yourself with the site. This will give you an essential introduction to the course, finding your way around, advice on learning independently and the best ways to communicate with tutors and other students.

Online courses require a much more self-motivated learning style than traditional attended classes. Participation in online discussions is a key part of the course – online learning is much more sociable than you might think! We encourage you to set aside a certain amount of time each week to log into the course to watch presentations and carry out activities. The minimum for this course is around 5-7 hours.

## **What hardware or software will I need?**

You will need access to a desktop or laptop computer. Most of the course will be accessible via a tablet/phone, but we recommend using a laptop or desktop computer as you will find some aspects of the course will be easier to use on a computer.

Regarding software, you will need an up-to-date browser (we recommend Firefox, Chrome or Safari). You will also need software that will open Word documents or PDFs. Most importantly you will need a reliable strong internet connection.

PropaGate Learning is available 24/7 with the exception of any maintenance work which we will inform you about in plenty of time.

## **What support is available?**

We encourage everyone to make the most of the forums on the course. These provide a way for students to talk to one another and to tutors and ask each other questions.

Tutors check the forums at regular intervals and will usually reply to forum queries within 5 working days, although usually sooner.

Our PropaGate Learning team are always available so if you ever feel you are stuck with a course-related technical problem, they can be contacted via the forums or by emailing: [propagate@rbge.org.uk](mailto:propagate@rbge.org.uk) where you will receive a response within 1 working day.

# 10. Course Fees

Tuition fees for the RBGE Diploma in Herbology Blended Learning programme are £3,700. Fees are non-refundable and should be paid in full by the start of the course:

- £500 on acceptance of place
- £3,200 by the start of the course

## Fees include:

- Full access to our Diploma in Herbology online learning resources on Propagate Learning, these include: topic notes, presentations, videos, group discussion forums and revisionary activities
- Tutorials & Assessments
- Study Weekend Visits
- All materials and equipment required for the Study Weekends here at RBGE

## Additional costs to be borne by students:

- Travel to and from Edinburgh together with accommodation during Study Weekends
- A computer with reliable internet access
- Green Pharmacy (herbal remedy making) ingredients
- Physic Garden Horticultural Equipment & Attire
- Students are expected to provide suitable clothing for their practical Physic Garden Horticulture activities during Study Weekends here at RBGE, (tools will be provided)

## 11. Entry Requirement

No formal qualifications are necessary for admission onto the course. Initial selection will be made on the strength of individual applications, and the successful candidates will be called to interview. However, as places are limited, priority will be given to those who are able to clearly demonstrate a natural aptitude and enthusiasm for the subject and or have attended one or more of our introductory programmes of study.

Experience in any of the related fields (botany, horticulture, herbal medicine) is highly desirable, as is a demonstrable eagerness to learn, engage with the natural world, and contribute something to the overall dynamics of the Herbology experience.

## 12. Application Procedure

To apply for the course, you must complete our [online application form](#). Applications for this course will open at 9:00am on Friday 25th April 2025 and will close at 5:00pm on Sunday 20th July 2025

Potential students may be invited to attend an interview with the Course Director before a place can be offered. Interviews may be via telephone/video call.

Successful applicants will be informed 2 weeks after the deadline closes and asked to pay a non-refundable deposit of £500 to confirm their place. The remaining fees must be paid before the start of the course.

# 13. The Next Step

Please note that the RBGE Diploma in Herbology does not qualify you to practice as a medical herbalist.

Upon completion of the RBGE Diploma in Herbology eager graduates may wish to pursue their herbal studies further. Our diploma has been designed to facilitate this and affords the perfect steppingstone towards progressing your knowledge in many of the associated botanical fields that the programme so readily encapsulates, such as phyto-therapeutics and green pharmacy, wild herbal ecology, ethnomedica, physic garden horticulture and design etc.

Our Diploma in Herbology graduates have pursued a wide range of exciting and highly individual herb-related enterprises. Amongst these have been the design and founding of medicinal or sensory healing gardens, engaging with urban regeneration and 'holistic green space' projects, progressing their studies to BSc level to become qualified medical herbalists (the RBGE dip. herb provides the perfect foundation of knowledge from which this might easily be achieved), setting up their own organic herb nurseries, lecturing and running herbal workshops (to inspire the next generation of herbologists!), managing and organizing local herb societies and activities, and contributing towards written articles for publication. Many have chosen to create bespoke collections of herbal products for their own, or to supply other herbal retail outlets. Knowledge gained during the diploma also assists involvement in conservation initiatives to help protect endangered and rare medicinal plants in the wild.

A diploma from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is recognized around the world, and the RBGE Diploma in Herbology is a unique qualification to hold, one that we hope will lead you on a most rewarding, fulfilling (and quite possibly life-changing!) path of self-discovery.

# 14. Terms & Conditions

- Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) reserves the right to cancel this programme of study
- RBGE is not liable for additional costs incurred by the student (travel, accommodation, Physic Garden attire etc.) in the event of cancellation.
- If the programme does not run any money paid to RBGE would be refunded in full.
- If you withdraw from the programme within 14 days of its commencement, your fees will be refunded minus your deposit. If you withdraw after 14 days no refund will be given.
- There is a time limit of 2 years to complete the programme in order to achieve the Diploma in Herbology. For every additional year an additional fee of £500 will be payable.
- We recommend that all students travelling to Edinburgh take out travel insurance for the duration of their trip to Edinburgh. Please check with your insurer whether your flights and accommodation would be covered in the event of a cancellation.

## What if I change my mind?

You are eligible for a full refund within 14 days of you sending your email of acceptance. If you wish to exercise your right to cancel within the 14 days, you must inform us of your decision within this cooling off period. You must inform us of your decision to withdraw from the course by email. Cancellation is effective from the date on which you send us your message.

## Refunds after 14 days, but before the course begins:

You will be issued a refund minus your £500 non-refundable deposit for cancellations after the 14-day cooling off period. You must inform us of your decision to withdraw from the course by email. Cancellation is effective from the date on which you send us your message.

## Refunds after the course has started:

We do not offer refunds after the course has started, except in exceptional circumstances. This would be at the discretion of the Education Department. Any refund would be minus your £500 non-refundable deposit and the value of the learning materials you have accessed/classes you have attended. You must inform us of your decision to withdraw from the course by email. Cancellation is effective from the date on which you send us your message.

Any exceptions to the refund policy outlined above will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be at the discretion of the Education Department and may be subject to a £50 administration fee.

Fees will not be refundable if you do not complete or pass the course.

## 15. Privacy Notice

RBGE will process your personal data for the administration of your course, to create your account on PropaGate Learning and to take payment (where relevant). RBGE will also process your personal data to inform you of any updates to the course, the admissions procedure, course dates, as well as any special offers. For more information see our [privacy notice](#).